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LAND REFORM IN AFGHANISTAN (LARA)

QUARTLERLY REPORT
JANUARY–MARCH 2011

APRIL 2011

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Principal Contacts: Nigel Thomson
Senior Technical Advisor/Manager
ARD, Inc.
Burlington, VT
Tel. +1 802 658-3890
Nigel.Thomson@tetrattech.com

Kelly Kimball
Project Manager
ARD, Inc.
Burlington, VT
Tel. +1 802 658-3890
Kelly.kimball@tetrattech.com

Implemented by:
Tetra Tech ARD
159 Bank Street, Suite 300
Burlington, Vermont
ard@tetrattech.com

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PREFACE

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Land Reform in Afghanistan Project (LARA) is managed by Tetra Tech ARD with implementation assistance from its partners Tetra Tech DPK, International Land Systems (ILS), Development & Training Services Inc (dTS), and Landesa (formerly the Rural Development Institute). LARA's primary government partners are ARAZI (formerly the Afghan Land Agency), the Ministry of Urban Development Affairs (MUDA), The Independent Directorate of Local Governance (IDLG), as well as the Supreme Court and selected local municipalities.

The Project continues USAID/Afghanistan's support for land reform and land rights strengthening begun through the earlier LTERA Project. The LARA Project comprises an 18-month Base Period (starting 30 January 2011) and an 18-month Option Period, with a contract amount of approximately \$70 million.

The Contract is entitled "Land Reform in Afghanistan" (USAID Contract No. 306-C-00-11-00514-00).

LARA is designed to contribute to USAID's Afghanistan National Development Strategy Assistance Objective (AO) 4: *A developed business climate that enables private investment, job creation, and financial independence*. Three influences will help shape LARA's contributions to this Objective: (1) the foundations provided by the former USAID Land Tenure and Economic Restructuring in Afghanistan (LTERA) project that provides a starting point and methods that can be adapted; (2) USAID/Afghanistan management objectives including Afghanization and conflict mitigation; and (3) the following major LARA objectives:

1. Strengthen institutional, policy, and legal reform to secure property rights for Afghan citizens;
2. Improve property rights delivery (land administration and formalization);
3. Enable all citizens (women, minorities, and vulnerable populations) to exercise their rights through public information awareness (PIA);
4. Strengthen land dispute resolution processes to reduce conflict and promote peace and stability;
5. Promote economic development through clear and enforceable property rights, PIA, land rights delivery, and land dispute resolution; and
6. Provide assistance in the cross-cutting areas of gender, training, PIA, and private sector development.

These objectives are supported by four components that provide the over-arching structure for programming activities and tasks in this work plan.

The LARA Project has four primary Components:

1. Assist ARAZI to identify, manage, lease, and obtain revenue from Afghan government lands and provide targeted technical assistance;
2. Build capacity of private sector service providers to provide land-related services to Afghan private and public sectors;
3. Support MUDA, Afghan Geodesy and Cartography Head Office (AGCHO), IDLG, and selected municipalities with informal settlements upgrading, formalization, cadastral mapping, laws for urban planning and land use regulation, and training in planning and enforcement; and

4. Strengthen tenure security by supporting the Supreme Court and communities with rights formalization and informal dispute resolution.

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AGCHO	Afghan Geodesy and Cartography Head Office
AIMS	Afghanistan Information Management Systems
ALCBO	Afghan Land and Capacity Building Organization
ALCO	Afghan Land Consulting Organization
AO	Assistance Objective
APPF	Afghanistan Public Protection Force
ARAZI	Afghanistan Land Authority
COP	Chief of Party
CRA	Cooperation for Reconstruction of Afghanistan
DCOP	Deputy Chief of Party
DFID	United Kingdom's Department for International Development
dTS	Development and Training Services, Inc.
Harakat	Afghan Investment Climate Facility Organization
IDLG	Independent Directorate of Local Governance
ILS	International Land Systems
LARA	Land Reform in Afghanistan
LLT	LARA Launch Team
LTERA	Land Tenure and Economic Restructuring in Afghanistan
MAIL	Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation, and Livestock
MCIT	Ministry of Communication and Information Technology
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MUDA	Ministry of Urban Development Affairs
NRC	Norwegian Refugee Council
PIA	Public Information Awareness
PSC	Private Security Contractors
SDO	Sanayee Development Organization

SGI	Spectre Group International
SOP	Standard Operating Procedures
SUPPORT	Services Under Program and Project Offices for Results Tracking
TLO	The Liaison Office
USG	United States Government
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Land Reform in Afghanistan (LARA) Project contract was awarded to Tetra Tech ARD on January 30, 2011 by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), following a nearly year-long procurement process. The first quarter of project implementation was focused on three overarching priorities: base period work planning, operational startup, and security. Significant progress was made in all three areas during the reporting period, culminating with submission of the LARA base period work plan, identification of office and residential space, hiring of nine local staff, the drafting of both a short and long term security plan, and the hiring of an international logistics firm to provide transportation and security guidance.

2.0 TECHNICAL ACTIVITIES AND WORK PLAN DEVELOPMENT

LARA's main technical activities during the program's first quarter focused on two key areas: re-engaging with local private and public sector partners and developing the program's base period work plan.

3.1 KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Upon arrival, the LARA Launch Team (LLT) held meetings with a comprehensive set of partners, many of which had been engaged in the initial proposal-period planning of LARA. Private partners included ARAZI (the Afghanistan Land Authority), Ministry of Urban Development Affairs (MUDA), the Supreme Court, Afghan Geodesy and Cartography Head Office (AGCHO), and the Ministry of Communication and Information Technology (MCIT). Private partners engaged by LARA included the Afghan Land Consulting Organization (ALCO), Afghan Land and Capacity Building Organization (ALCBO), Cooperation for Reconstruction of Afghanistan (CRA), Sanayee Development Organization (SDO), The Liaison Office (TLO), LandRights, the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), the Afghanistan Information Management Systems (AIMS), and Harakat (the Afghan Investment Climate Facility Organization), among others. Initial meetings were useful both for the respective partners, who were able to learn how LARA planned to engage and assist them in their respective activities and operations, and for the LARA team, who were updated on how the on-the-ground situation has changed in Afghanistan since the LARA proposal was written in October.

Such meetings also helped to introduce members of the long-term LARA team to local counterparts and to begin engaging stakeholders in the LARA planning process. The LLT realized very early on that stakeholder buy-in would be crucial for the success of the program. It was for this purpose that in addition to the one-on-one meetings, a series of workshops was held in order to gather priorities and viewpoints on LARA's main activities. Such workshops, held at the Checchi Services Under Program and Project Offices for Results Tracking (SUPPORT) facility, were very successful in gauging the priorities and concerns of local partners on a wide variety of levels and in beginning to define the specific roles that LARA's partners are qualified for and interested in playing during project implementation.

The natural product of these activities was revision to the draft LARA base period work plan, submitted to USAID on March 30, 2011. While this work plan maintained many of the elements originally envisioned in the LARA proposal, adjustments were made to reflect the current situation on the ground, including the wide variety of private sector partners to be engaged by LARA (rather than a single Afghan entity) as well as the adjusted level of funding for the LARA base period.

Given the nearly year-long procurement process, some activities originally envisioned to fall under LARA's scope of work were instead implemented by Harakat, with funding from the United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DFID). Therefore, LARA will need to adjust the work plan soon, eliminating activities that have already been done or that are in progress through Harakat, identifying those activities that have not yet been done, and adjusting other activities to optimize the work being currently undertaken.

The Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation, and Livestock (MAIL) is already aware of this overlap issue and has officially requested that the United States Embassy fund specific activities that are not currently under LARA's scope. At the same time, ARAZI has also announced that they will not accept any technical assistance from LARA until there is a formal agreement in place between the MAIL and the United States Government (USG).

3.0 OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES

Operational activities absorbed a significant amount of LARA level of effort during this quarter, as the program is in the process of starting up and being put into action. Main priorities this quarter included development and implementation of standard operating procedures (SOPs) for all operational activities, identification of office and residential compounds, identification and hiring of operational staff, planning for procurement of equipment for both the office and residence, identification and mobilization of long-term expatriate staff, and a multitude of other small tasks associated with getting a project of this size operational.

4.1 KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

During the LARA program's first quarter, suitable spaces for both the office and residence were identified, inspected, and acquired through leases. While each building has significant upgrading upcoming, including improvements for security, internet, and water quality, the LARA team fully anticipates moving operations and residence into these facilities in the next quarter.

In regard to local recruitment, LARA placed advertisements for operational staff early on in the startup, as such staff is vital to human resource functions, upgrading of the previously mentioned edifices, and financial management of the program. As of the end of March, staff for the following positions had been recruited, interviewed, and approved by USAID; appointment is anticipated in April:

- Ghulam Sakhi Fana, Property and Inventory Specialist;
- Abdul Saleem Taheri, Information Technology Specialist;
- Mir Sohail, Accountant;
- Khadija Sadat, Administrative Assistant;
- Tamana Panahy, Finance Assistance;
- Mohammad Aimal Tarin, Grants Specialist;
- Mohammad Fazil, HR Specialist;
- Nesar Ahmad Rasekh, Office Manager; and
- Basit Karimi, Logistics Specialist.

Recruitment for operational staff is ongoing. LARA expects to hire the full contingent of operational staff well within the second program quarter.

In order to outfit the office and residence, LARA has taken two approaches to equipment procurement. The first has been coordination with other projects which are closing down. Through this route, LARA has procured significant amounts of property, including generators, beds, carpets, heaters, and many other household items. All transferred inventory was inspected in advance to ensure that each is in good

working condition. However, the project will need to acquire a number of items through direct procurement (purchasing), especially in regards to office furniture. A list of items has been drafted and quotes for such will be gathered as necessary.

In regard to expatriate staff, three positions had been fielded as of the end of March: the Chief of Party (COP), Ligia Carvajal; the Deputy Chief of Party (DCOP) for Operations, Cynthia Bowes; and the Program Coordinator, Emily Getman. Identified and approved individuals included Gary Hunter, Cadastral Specialist; John Cunningham, Land Valuation Specialist; Jasteena Dhillon, Land Conflict Resolution Specialist; and Alpha Koroma, Finance Specialist. These staff will be mobilized in April/early May. LARA is recruiting for the following expatriate positions: Gender Specialist, Communication Specialist, Compliance Specialist, and Urban Planner.

Expatriate staff have been residing, and will continue to reside, in Green Village until the residential building is renovated for occupancy.

4.0 SECURITY

Though Tetra Tech ARD proposed to contract for security through Garda World in the LARA proposal, this subcontract was rejected by USAID prior to contract signing due to Presidential Decree 62, which pertains to Private Security Contractors (PSCs). To provide secure transportation and security guidance for the startup phase of the program, LARA therefore contracted a logistics firm, Spectre Group International (SGI). SGI has provided both armored and softskin vehicles, as well as drivers and unarmed escorts, to LARA expatriates in-country. This contract was expanded to include static security at the LARA office and residential compounds for protection of LARA property (such as generators) after the leases were signed.

As the formal bridging strategy for the Afghan Public Protection Force (APPF) has been released by the Afghan government, and in accordance with guidance provided by the United States Embassy, LARA anticipates signing a formal contract with Garda World once they have received their full licensing through the Ministry of Interior and their contract has been approved by USAID.

5.0 FINANCIAL

LARA Quarterly Financials January-March 2011 Q2

Budget Line Items	Approved Budget for Base Period	Jan-11	Feb-11	Mar-11	Total Quarter 2	Total Invoiced To Date	% Budget Spent
Contract Number 306-C-00-11-00514-00							
Salaries and Wages	\$2,480,907	\$0	\$7,562	\$77,894	\$85,457	\$85,457	3%
Fringe Benefits	\$739,080	\$0	\$2,793	\$28,766	\$31,559	\$31,559	4%
Travel, Transportation and Perdiem	\$1,135,281	\$0	\$0	\$102	\$102	\$102	0%
Procurement Equipment and Supplies	\$97,415	\$0	\$558	\$152	\$711	\$711	1%
Communications	\$146,400	\$0	\$0	\$29	\$29	\$29	0%
Subcontracts/Consultants	\$27,396,385	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	0%
Allowances	\$1,642,765	\$0	\$309	\$22,288	\$22,596	\$22,596	1%
Direct Facilities Costs	\$217,896	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	0%
Other Direct Costs	\$3,138,943	\$0	\$1,269	\$7,260	\$8,529	\$8,529	0%
Security	\$3,009,639	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	0%
Grants Under Contract	\$8,000,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	0%
Indirect Costs	\$3,008,149	\$0	\$5,174	\$55,061	\$60,235	\$60,235	2%
Fixed Fee	\$3,570,900	\$0	\$1,236	\$13,408	\$14,645	\$14,645	0%
Total Costs	\$54,583,760	\$0	\$18,901	\$204,962	\$223,863	\$223,863	0%

6.0 OBJECTIVES FOR NEXT QUARTER

LARA's second operational quarter will be vital, as the majority of technical activities must begin during this short timeframe. Technical activities will begin with a series of assessments of local partners in both the public and private sectors. Such assessments will give program technicians a clear view of the resource and capacity/training needs for the local partners. Activities to address these will then be formulated according to each partner's needs. LARA expects to execute subcontracts with private sector partners prior to the middle of the month.

LARA will also officially launch in the beginning of June, in accordance with the schedule of USAID. The program anticipates having a number of Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) with Afghan ministries and other institutions signed and ready to be announced at the launch.

LARA expects to continue and conclude hiring, both for technical and operational positions, expatriate and local personnel. Office and residential compounds will also become fully operational during the program's second quarter. Staff will be moved in and working comfortably and productively.

U.S. Agency for International Development

1300 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW

Washington, DC 20523

Tel: (202) 712-0000

Fax: (202) 216-3524

www.usaid.gov